



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

Summer 2018

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First Universalist Church

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Sunday Services | July and August 2018

July 1 | *The Little Sycamore Seedling.* Literature is replete with stories of stray pets who wandered into our lives and became cherished family members. Have you ever heard of a stray tree?
—Peter House, Summer Minister

July 8 | *Mapping Life Backwards.* Midlife is a time for reflection and assessment. As we enter our later years, it's common to question our choices and wonder if we lived up to our potential. Looking back on our youth, it now feels that we once had unlimited opportunities. But did we?
—Peter House, Summer Minister

July 15 | *How Many Unexcused Absences Should We Allow?* We all move through the world in our own bubble. From our limited perspective, we think we understand the world, and how it works. But do we? Is my neighbor's world the same as my world? We can all be more compassionate if we are willing to pop our bubbles.
—Peter House, Summer Minister

July 22 | *The Gift of Our Absence.* As humans, we are wired for relationship and connection. As conscientious citizens we are taught to get involved, and stay involved, even when the going gets rough. But sometimes, the healthiest thing we can do for ourselves, and the best way to serve, is to step away.
—Peter House, Summer Minister

July 29 | *What About That Glass?* Consider optimism and whether an optimistic point of view makes sense in our complicated world.
—Rev. Catherine Coates



Peter House Summer Minister



We have all heard the proverb “May you live in interesting times.” Often it is meant as a curse, the presumption being that interesting times are those of strife and unrest, and times of peace and prosperity, while pleasant, are not as exciting or challenging. As with all good proverbs, there is a great deal of truth to this one.

We are currently living in one of the most interesting times I can recall, as the current occupant of the White House wreaks a kind of self-inflicted havoc on our societal norms and values that is completely unprecedented. None of us has ever seen anything like what we have experienced since January 2017. And while I could take up the entire *Outlook* with a catalog of anomalies and atrocities, I will focus on the aberrant assault on objective fact which has dominated and garbled political discourse and caused arguments and rifts among families and friends.

Compounding this problem is social media. The past ten years have turned all of us into mini-media figures, complete with a platform, and followers. With the touch of a key, we can disseminate “facts” to hundreds of people. We can also engage in debate with friends and strangers about controversial and emotionally volatile issues. In spite of our better instincts, it is so easy to get sucked in.

This is where we, as Unitarian Universalists, can look to our fourth principle for guidance. “We affirm and promote a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.” It seems that most of the time, we focus on the “free” aspect of this principle. But, right now, it is crucial that we give more weight to the “responsible” half of the equation.

In a world where truth is becoming a dwindling commodity, we all have a duty to seek and share it in the most responsible and faithful way possible.

This means thoroughly fact checking things before we share them on social media. It means carefully considering our words before we jump into the fray of discussion. It means taking the time to question, and research what we hear. It means vetting sources, questioning motivations, and challenging misinformation. It means seeking always to use our words to edify and educate and using our minds to reason and restrain.

Our times are already interesting enough. Let’s not add to the interest. Instead, let us all covenant to inspire those around us to engage in the most responsible search for truth and meaning possible.

August 2018 Sermons

August 5 | *Thirteen Years with Mary Beth.* All my life I’ve had cats and derived great pleasure and comfort from their companionship. But my cat Mary Beth has tested me like no other cat I’ve ever had. We will explore what we can learn from less-than-perfect pets (and people).

August 12 | - *The Next Big Social Justice Challenge.* Animal rights activists are often portrayed as kooks for suggesting that animals have feelings and rights. But I believe they are on the forefront of an important social justice issue. We will explore why some of us may be so resistant to their message.

August 19 - | *Why a Peaceful Heart is the First Step.* Pope Benedict once equated the Buddhist path to narcissism and charged that it offered transcendence without imposing concrete religious obligations. This Sunday, we will refute this charge, and explore why a peaceful heart is essential to being a force for good in the world.

August 26 | TBA

September 02 | TBA

Project Team Update

Our Journey to Justice

Submitted by Dolores Da Lomba

“We who believe in freedom cannot rest.” The choir sang this beautiful song a few months ago and I couldn’t get the words or the music out of my mind. I later learned that these were words of the civil rights leader, Ella Baker, memorialized in Sweet Honey in the Rock’s haunting music, *Ella’s Song*.

Ella Josephine Baker was born in Norfolk, VA, in 1903. Her grandmother, with whom she was very close, had been born a slave and told Ella stories of being beaten because she refused to marry the man her slaveholder had chosen for her. Although Ella’s parents were able to see that she was well educated, Ella identified with the oppressed early in her life and became active in her college days.

Although she is not so well known, Ella Baker is considered one of the most influential women in the Civil Rights Movement as well as one of the most important African-American leaders of the 20th century. In her early career, she was a Field Secretary for the NAACP. Later, she worked alongside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other well-known Civil Rights leaders although she differed with them in how they perceived the role of women in the movement.

She left the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) to cofound the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and later the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party as an alternate to the state’s segregated Democratic Party. She was a brilliant organizer but chose to work in the background, promoting grass roots organizations and empowering the oppressed to fight for themselves, rather than following a charismatic leader.

Her nickname was Fundi. Fundi is a Swahili word and means one who passes on a craft to another, which she did by encouraging and mentoring young leaders. She did not confine her efforts to the fight against racism, but critiqued sexism and classism as

well. She said that the fight is for freedom of the human spirit, a larger freedom that encompasses all mankind.

She died on her birthday, December 13, 1986, in New York City, where she worked tirelessly mentoring leaders and groups in her later years. The Ella Baker Center for Human Rights was founded in 1995 as a hotline for those suffering from police brutality. Its efforts are now broadened, and it fights against mass incarceration and works to strengthen low income and minority communities.

Baker’s philosophy was to engage communities to work for positive changes and to inspire people to imagine new possibilities. As our congregation works toward engaging with the community in the struggle against systemic racism, we can look to Ella Baker and her work for inspiration.



Thank You!

From Rev. Peggy Meeker

Thank you ALL for a great year and for the lovely gifts I received at the picnic from Nancy Gaede on behalf of the congregation—two delphiniums, now happily starting to bloom in my garden, and a beautiful quilted table runner / wall hanging showing three chalices. You are a strong, caring, active, wonderful congregation, and I’ve been blessed to have had this time with you. Many thanks!!



Small Group Ministry (SGM)

Opportunity

Submitted by Connie Valk



The SGM that meets on Thursday afternoons from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm twice each month has a few slots open for new participants in the fall.

The sessions are held at the home of Connie Valk in the section of the city close to the zoo entrance. Let Connie or Bob Remley know if you are interested. You can also email office@uuroc.org, and your interest will be passed on to them.

Small Group Ministry is designed to foster connection and caring, to provide an avenue for personal growth and spiritual development and, ultimately, to strengthen the fabric of our

Social Justice Plate

Submitted by Shirley Bond

I am pleased to announce that June's collection earmarked for Rochester Community Bikes amounted to \$346! Well done, everyone.



As we wrap up the church year we are excited that the committee chose well deserving, small but effective groups with a strong local presence to be our recipients this past church year.

Well Ventions, a Teen Farmers Market start-up, Mom's Demand Action, Rochester People's Climate Coalition, Migrant Workers Summer Camp, and Rochester Community Bikes are a few of the grateful organizations that received funds. Our bulletin board contained many thank-you cards this year.

See you in September! —The Social Justice Plate Committee: Shirley Bond, Bill Elwell, and Marcia Weaver.

RAIHN Works!



*Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network
Keeping families together.
Getting families home for good.*

Submitted by Marti Eggers

"I really appreciate everything you guys have done for me and continue to do. I came to RAIHN at one of the worst times of my life and through all your help I was able to get stable again."

Before she became homeless, "Jane" had been living in an apartment with her grandson, for whom she had legal custody. She had her associates degree and had been consistently working full time, carefully saving for her rent each month. When the money that she had saved was stolen, she fell behind in her rent and was evicted.

When she entered the RAIHN program, Jane was at a very low point, discouraged and depressed. She and her grandson were in the program for just over three months, during which time she was able to save some money for a deposit on an apartment along with some rent money to get started again.

Since securing permanent housing, she has participated in a RAIHN rental subsidy program and is making budget preparations to no longer receive rental assistance. She was also working a second job to make ends meet for a while. With the subsidy, she has been able to leave the second job, which saved on childcare costs and allowed her to spend time with her grandson. She will graduate from RAIHN's aftercare program at the end of July. She continues to work full-time, has a car, and hopes to attend RAIHN's inaugural financial literacy course to be offered later this year. RAIHN works!



Who Wants To Be a Hero?

Submitted by Kate Fleury

A brand new Phillips HeartStart AED has been purchased by our First Universalist Congregation and is mounted in the area between the sanctuary and the Clara Barton Lounge, near the secretary's office. It is labeled "AED."

This happened thanks to the untiring efforts by Janine Casillo, who advocated for it for more than a year. She also arranged discounts and grants so that we were able to pay about half the usual cost of a new defibrillator. Thank you, Janine, for not giving up! You are the first hero in this tale.

What is an AED? The letters stand for "Automated External Defibrillator." The defibrillator is a device that was invented by William Kouwenhoven, an electrical engineer, in 1930. The portable defibrillator was invented by an Irish cardiologist, Frank Pantridge. It went into use as pre-hospital treatment of ventricular fibrillation, a life-threatening heart rhythm, in 1968. Dr. Pantridge became known as the "Father of Emergency Medicine."

To begin with, anyone can be a "hero," even without training, using an AED. If someone collapses and is not responsive to attempts to awaken them and if there is no heartbeat or breathing, just turning on the AED with the green button is all that is needed to begin. The machine is designed to speak and to tell a rescuer what to do. If this situation develops, grab the AED, push the green "on" button, and follow the voice prompts.

However, maybe some of us would like to be trained rescuer heroes. If this is you, please join us for classes in using the AED and saving a life on the following dates: July 1, 8, 15, 22, August 12, 19, September 2, 9, or 16. You can participate in an American Heart Association class led by instructor Kate Fleury, RN, BSN. The classes will be held in the sanctuary at 12:30 pm on Sundays after church. You will learn basic CPR and how to use the AED so you can be a more prepared hero. You will receive a certificate of attendance and there is no written test!

Another form of heroism is the need for a small group of people to maintain and monitor the AED and its use. If you are interested in participating at this level, please contact Kate Fleury via office@uuroc.org. We will be in contact with the local EMS and will follow American Heart guidelines for our AED program here.

We are grateful and enthusiastic about being able to offer this additional level of service to our congregation. Please consider joining us in any way that feels good for you. We love heroes here at First Universalist.



March with us in the Pride Parade, July 21!

Submitted by Connie Valk

We say we want First Universalist to have visibility in the community for our Social Justice efforts. Here is one way we make it happen:

March down Park Avenue with us on July 21. UUs from other churches will march beside us.

Under the present political climate, the rights of the LGBTQ community are being rolled back. Our presence in support of LGBTQ rights is required of us. Please sign up in the Clara Barton Lounge on Sundays in July at the Pride Table.

Gathering time is 12:00 pm with the Parade starting at 1:00 pm, but more details—including carpooling to the parade—will be shared by those who sign up or email the office office@uuroc.org. We are registered under the name "GUUSTO"—Genesee UUs Standing Together. Ask anyone with a clipboard to point the way to our line-up spot.

For more information:

<https://www.everfest.com/e/roc-pride-fest-rochester-ny>.

Eco-Justice

Isn't "Cogeneration" a Pretty Word?

Submitted by Kate Fleury

What if there were a way to capture energy that is wasted? While we are creating electricity? Whaaaaat?

Using information from Paul Hawken's *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*, let's take a brief look at a great idea. In the United States, coal-fired or nuclear electricity is created, but the heat generated as a by-product is wasted: about 60%! Is wasted! Into the sky = atmosphere, gee, do we really need to be adding more heat to our precious protective shield? By improving the design of how energy is created in coal and nuclear plants, we could recapture that heat for other uses. This is called "Cogeneration," or "Combined Heat and Power," or "CHP."

Has this ever been done? Well, yes. Yes, it has. In Denmark power generation has been decentralized to local districts, tax incentives have encouraged use of cogeneration systems, and greenhouse gas emissions are lowered. There, 80% of heating needs as well as 60% of electricity demands are met by CHP. In Finland, the biomass available from the paper and forest industries is used co-generatively so that almost 70% of heating needs are being met using CHP.

For individual households, "microgeneration" units are in development to take advantage of efficiencies of combined heat and power. For now, these are quite expensive. Over time, these units may become affordable enough to be generally adoptable.

In the United States, utility companies have historically objected to the use of co-generation. However, now there is a state-of-the-art CHP system nearing completion at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Co-generation will save money by making full use of the power used to generate electricity. The system will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It will reduce the need for reliance on fossil fuels and nuclear power. Local systems close to the source of energy production will reduce the need to transport that energy. Co-generation will even reduce water use and thermal water pollution. See? I said co-generation was a pretty word!

Finance Team

A Deficit: What Does it Mean?

Submitted by Ann Rhody

At the church's annual meeting in June, the congregation heard that we will likely end this fiscal year with a deficit. What does that mean? How concerned should we be?

A deficit in a fiscal year, quite simply, means that we spent more money than we took in. That's it. Prior to each fiscal year (for the church, a "fiscal year" means the period of time between July 1 and the following June 30), we try our best to predict income and expenses, using all of the best information at our disposal. Of course, as with all predictions, nothing is exactly as expected! Expenses and income might vary from our estimates, and so at the end of the year, if expenses run higher and income runs lower, we have a deficit.

How concerned should we be? While we finance types always like to see things on the plus side, we have enjoyed very large surpluses the past few fiscal years, and this year, the pendulum is likely to swing in the other direction. As of this writing, we are looking at a possible deficit of \$10--\$15,000, which, while troubling, is not a "big deal" in the grand scheme of things, as long as it doesn't become a pattern. We'll know more after the first few weeks in July, when all deposits are in and we can balance the books.

Three important notes regarding the deficit:

- The church's overall financial position remains strong. Our endowment and "carryover funds" are healthy and can withstand a small deficit. We are fortunate to have members and friends who generously support the church with time, talent, and treasure!
- The anticipated deficit pertains to the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2018. For the *new* fiscal year (July 1, 2018--June 30, 2019) the finance committee prepared, and the congregation passed a budget which is balanced, which is our practice.
- One area affecting the deficit is any unpaid pledges. Haven't finished paying your 2017--2018 pledge yet? Even after June 30, it's not too late. Consult your statement or contact us to see if you have an outstanding balance. If so, please submit your check with "2017--2018 pledge" in the memo line, and we'll make sure it's applied accordingly.

Thanks for your support and confidence in the Finance Team at First Universalist.

Living Our Values, Making A Difference

Photo by Connie Valk

GRCC Honorees June 5, 2018

Friends gathered to honor Rev. Peggy Meeker and Tom Ruganis for their service and dedication at the Burgundy Basin Inn. Everyone enjoyed a delicious meal and wonderful fellowship.



Zero Tolerance Rally, June 2018

Photos by Paula Marchese



Bridget Watts represented our church and the Harvesting Social Justice Circle at the rally.

Trump Immigration Policy Veers from Abhorrent to Evil. Mothers recount how federal agents took away their small children.



Trump's zero tolerance policy at the border has separated many children from their parents. We must keep families together! #familiesbelongtogether



The event was organized by NY ACLU. For more information see <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/30/opinion/immigration-family-separation-border.html>

House Committee News

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

This was going to be my last House Committee News as Chair of the House Committee, and technically it is. Going forward, Ed Deller and I will serve as Co-Chairs of the committee. I am extremely grateful that Ed has so graciously agreed to help in the care of our beloved building even more than he already has.

As mentioned last month, we are organizing a painting day to address some of the areas of the building that need a fresh coat of paint. So far, the areas to be addressed include the minister's study, the religious education wing bathrooms, the religious education stairwell and perhaps part of the Court Street foyer as well as the posts in the Clara Barton Lounge. This has been scheduled for Saturday August 18 with follow-up on Monday August 20. If you are interested in helping, please let the House Committee know.

In other news:

- The windows for the minister's study and the smaller windows in the volunteer office have been ordered and should be installed this month.
- An eyebolt was cemented into the ground near the vegetable garden. This is to allow the new composter (and possibly other items) to be secured.

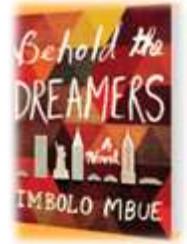
As always, if you are interested in joining the House committee or helping out with on-going support of the building please feel free to contact anyone on the committee. The House Committee is currently: Tom Ruganis and Ed Deller (Co-Chairs), Sarah Singal, Marcy Klein, Michael Scott, Shirley Bond. We would love to hear from you!



Book Group

Submitted by Sarah Singal and Shirley Bond

The selection for the summer is *Behold the Dreamers* by Imbolo Mbue. Jende Jonga, an immigrant from Cameroon, arrives in New York with a visitor's visa and a pocketful of dreams. He lands a job as a chauffeur for a very rich guy and soon learns that there is a downside to life in America. It's an interesting debut novel, but don't take our word for it!



The book group does not have a bunch of rules and as a matter of fact you don't even have to read the book, but it helps. Join us for some interesting conversation and meet some great people!

We will meet on August 26 at 11:15 am upstairs in the Chalice Room to spend a stress-free hour discussing this important work.

Drop-in Discussion Summer Schedule

Submitted by Beth Ares and David Damico

Drop-in discussions are held each Sunday in the Chalice Room on the second floor of our church, after the church service during the summer until September 2, 2018.

Sometimes our discussions are based on certain books or articles, but you don't have to read anything or do any advance preparation to participate. Just drop in. People of all viewpoints are welcome to make presentations or join in the discussions.

July 1 | *My Experience with Students with Disabilities in the Last Two Years.* Did you have difficulty in primary or secondary school from a health-related issue? How did you resolve it? Discussion led by David Damico.

July 8 | *On Words.* How they affect or annoy us. Do you have a word or use of one that "bugs" you? and why? Discussion led by Shelly Adams.

Drop-in Discussion Summer Schedule

continued

July 15 | *The Road to Character*. What do St. Augustine, George Eliot, and Dwight Eisenhower have in common? They all appear as exemplars of what it means to be a person of character in David Brooks' 2015 study. Lew Ward-Baker will follow up on his recent discussion of the book.

July 22 | *Philanthropy*. If Oprah gave you \$2,000 to donate to worthy causes, how would you decide what to do with it? With the current threats to our environment, human rights, affordable health care, and social security, to name a few, can we "save the world" with our monetary donations? Beth Ares will lead the discussion.

July 29 | No discussion

August 5 | *The Rise and Fall of Adam and Eve*. The biblical story of Adam and Eve has generated controversy for the past 2,000 years. This story of the Fall of Man (caused by a woman?) and Original Sin has been an important influence in Western civilization. This book by Stephen Greenblatt describes the evolution of these ideas. Discussion led by Jim Milch.

August 12 | *BS Jobs*. Some jobs are so pointless that even the people who do them don't think they're any use. *BS Jobs* by David Graeber is about people in such jobs. Phil Ebersole will summarize the main points of the book and lead a discussion.

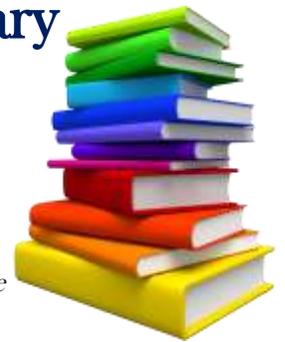
August 19 | "*Spiritual Monstrosities*," based on Karen Armstrong's book, *The Battle for God*. A discussion of fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam will be led by Janus Mary Jones.

August 26 | The Book Group will discuss July's selection *Behold the Dreamers* by Imbolo Mbue.

September 2 | TBD

September 9 | TBD

Church Library and Bookstore



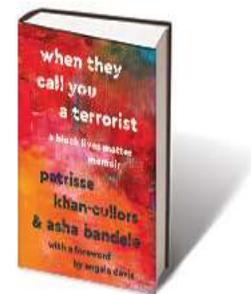
Submitted by Phil Ebersole

Library Summer Hours

The library will be open only two Sundays during the summer, July 15 and August 19. We will resume our regular weekly schedule again starting on September 2.

When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir by Patrisse Khan-Cullors and Asha Bandele

Submitted by Phil Ebersole



The First Universalist Church library has been given five copies of *When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir* by Patrice Khan-Cullors, a co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement, and Asha Bandele. They may be checked out Sundays whenever the library is open.

They are the first of a special shelf of books about social justice donated and recommended by the Faith in Action Council.

Staff Summer Hours



Peter House - Summer Minister

Office hours by appointment.

Call the minister's study if you'd like to schedule an appointment.

(585) 325-5092

Andrea Lewis - Office Administrator

Monday thru Thursday 9:00 am - 3:45 pm

The office will be closed on Fridays.

Brandon Fagan - Sexton

Tuesday & Thursday

approx. 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Sunday approx. 8:30 am - 12:30 pm

June was a busy month for Roc/ACTS—lots of activity on several different issues. For example, The Alliance of the Police Accountability Board, of which First Universalist is a member, was focused mainly on developing a strategy to lobby City Council to approve a PAB with five pillars: Independence, Subpoena Power, Investigative Power, Disciplinary Power, and Power to Review Police Policy.

The current strategy for lobbying for the PAB is to meet with City Council and to reach out to the community through public forums. It has been proposed that we could put PAB on the ballot using the referendum process, eliminating a need for an uncooperative city council. We will keep you posted.

June 16 was the date for an immigration rally held at Charlotte Beach. There were several First Universalist church members present and the support from the beachgoers was amazing.

Shirley Bond and Tess McFarland Porter attended The Greater Rochester Regional Community Police Relations Summit held on June 16. One workshop was on police practices: use of force and how it impacts victims of color and the poor. The other workshop was on anti-racism, education, and training for law enforcement.

The June 19 City Council meeting was attended by MANY First Universalist members. It was so good to see so many congregants interested in a Police Accountability Board that will address issues of systemic injustice including racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and other forms of discrimination.

It was also great to see organizations coming together and communicating with each other for common goals. I will keep you posted on the activities Roc/ACTS will be involved in over the summer.

Please contact Shirley Bond (I'm in the church directory) or Bob Remley if interested in getting involved.

First Universalist Church

150 South Clinton Avenue
Rochester, New York 14604

First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

Nurture the spirit and serve the community

First Universalist Church is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association, a liberal religion with historical roots in the Jewish and Christian traditions.

Worship service begins at 10:00 am Sundays

Summer Minister | Peter House

Minister of Life Span Faith Development | The Rev. Michelle Yates

Music Director

Sexton | Brandon Fagan

Nursery Care Providers | Carol Williams & Sundae Hodge

Office Administrator | Andrea Lewis

Office hours, Monday - Thursday, 9:00 am - 3:45 pm

Closed Fridays. **Telephone** 585.546.2826



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Editor, *This Week at First Universalist* (digital) and monthly newsletter *Our Outlook*: Andrea Lewis

More information is available on our website: <http://uuroc.org>. The usual deadline for all submissions to Our Outlook is the 20th of each month.